

Indoor air quality and human health

Truth vs mass hysteria

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Abstract

Indoor air quality is an important issue, because anything we breathe can potentially affect our health. To determine if there is a real health risk, well-designed scientifically valid studies must be performed. Although much attention has focused on sick building syndrome, chemical sensitivities, and mycotoxicosis, there actually is very little evidence that these conditions have an adverse effect on human health. In contrast, real health issues have been shown to exist regarding indoor air triggers of allergies and asthma. Outdoor allergens are difficult to avoid because the pollen grains we encounter outdoors, which are the size that can cause allergies, are windborne and can travel for miles. However, indoor allergens can cause severe allergic symptoms and may also have a priming effect on an individual's susceptibility to simultaneous or subsequent exposure of other outdoor allergens. Therefore, it is important to minimize exposure to indoor allergens. Determination of individual susceptibility can be paired with knowledge of the

patient's indoor exposure pattern to produce a customized management plan of avoidance, which can be used in conjunction with pharmacological treatment of allergies and asthma, as well as immunotherapy.

Index Entries

Indoor air quality molds hygiene hypothesis allergen avoidance atopy
environmental exposures sick building syndrome

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